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ABSTRACT

In 1988 and 1989 there was extensive political intervention into New Zealand's education system. In 1988, as part of the Labour Government's wide ranging reform program, broader social values were deployed against "provider capture" in education. The Picot Taskforce recommended the radical devolution of power, resources, and responsibilities to education institutions and local communities. As a result, a large department of education was replaced by a new compact ministry, a national review agency was established to provide systemic accountability, and the terms of professional service, leadership, and governance in education were redefined. This paper, written from a participant-observer's viewpoint, discusses the Guthrie and Koppich model of high political reform in education. In essence, Guthrie and Koppich assert that significant political reform hinges on three preconditions: alignment, initiative, and mobilization. New Zealand's national education service, in existence since 1877, evolved into a system of sectorized incrementalism. In contrast, traditional political action has been primarily regional or local in nature. The Picot Taskforce noted that the combined effects of new technology, changing pluralistic values, new cultural sensitivity, and the intensifying demands on educational services had outstripped the system's administrative capacities. Picot opted for radical devolution to reinforce the professionalism of individual teachers, parents, and community participants. In the case of New Zealand, the Guthrie and Koppich model was employed to determine significance and realign social reality. (42 references) (MLH)

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THE RECONSTRUCTION OF NEW ZEALAND EDUCATION: A CASE OF 'HIGH POLITICS' REFORM¹

by R J S Macpherson²

In 1988 and 1989 there was political intervention into education on a scale never before seen in New Zealand. While the culture and traditions of educational administration had been able to withstand an earlier bipartisan challenge from Parliamentarians (Scott, 1986), an electoral backlash in 1987 triggered major political intervention. In 1988, as part of the Labour Government's wide ranging social reform programme, broader social values were deployed against 'provider capture' in education — where the providers of a service have captured their terms of service. The Picot Taskforce³ recommended the radical devolution of power, resources and responsibilities to education institutions and local communities.

The effects were dramatic. A large Department of Education (DoE) was replaced by a new compact Ministry, a national Review agency was established to provide systemic accountability, and the terms of professional service, leadership and governance in education were redefined.

This paper was written by a New Zealander who provided structural advice to the Picot Taskforce for the six months prior to its reporting in May 1988. It therefore draws on the perspectives of a participant observer, as well as from other research on the emergence of counter pressures to the radical reforms, and discusses the Guthrie and Koppich⁴ model of 'high politics reform' in education.

The Guthrie and Koppich Model

In essence, Guthrie and Koppich assert that significant political reform is contingent on three preconditions — alignment, initiative and mobilisation — and that 'high politics' reform has particular features.

The first precondition, alignment, requires the confluence of four politically related phenomena; the nature of a culture's deep-seated public policy preferences, when the society involved defines education as a 'political problem', when alternative policies have been defined, and when political practices cohere with reformism. The second precondition, initiative, is the putated injection of uncertainty and other destabilising influences. Guthrie and Koppich noted the recent international effects of economic and demographic dynamics.

The third precondition they suggest, mobilisation, is required so that champions and catalytic groups actually take advantage of enabling conditions and predisposing events. In other words, they claim that 'policy entrepreneurs' have to desire and advocate reforms, have the political skills to recognise and exploit opportunities when they occur, and have to be able to provide direction and

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to sustain the momentum of reform. The key indicators of reform, according to Guthrie and Koppich (p.4), are therefore 'dramatic alterations in *distribution* and *ideology*,' especially in decision-making power, resource allocations, mandates and prohibitions, and ultimately, in new values and constituencies.

The first and familiar approach to testing the adequacy of this or any other theory is to establish how well it coheres with the context, phases and consequences of recent events in context.

Background

A System of Sectored Incrementalism

New Zealand has had a national education service since 1877. It has long been differentially administered by sector. The University Grants Committee (UGC) advised the Government and distributed allocated resources to seven universities which had their own Acts and governing bodies. The six teachers colleges and 22 polytechnics were administered by the DoE's Head and Regional offices. And while they had governing councils, the degrees of discretion they had varied, and were contested. Special schools were controlled and administered by the DoE's Head and Regional Offices.

In 1988, the 349 public secondary schools had Boards of Governors that acted within the personnel, curriculum and resources policies determined at 'the Centre'. Some schools that traversed the primary-secondary divide had Committees of Management with unique but less powers than Boards of Governors since they were also responsible to District Education Boards.

Similarly, the 2377 state primary schools had school committees for support purposes but were controlled and administered from three locations; by one of the 10 Education Boards, by one of the three Regional Offices, as well as by the Head Office of the DoE. Pre-school kindergartens and playcentres were administered by the Head Office of the DoE, with Education Boards providing support services. Although these multiple and confused patterns of administration were the stuff of legend, they had developed incrementally over decades and were welded into place with a centralist culture.

Major cracks became evident in the early 1980s. One appeared when the *Kohanga Reo* (Maori 'language nest') pre-schools refused from their inception to accept any linkages with the DoE. Claiming that the mechanisms of state in education had been oppressive and culturally counter-productive, they insisted on governing and leading their schools site by site. They were eventually funded via the Department of Maori Affairs.

Guthrie and Koppich's preconditions were therefore present, but it was more fundamental than a case of misaligned policy references. The coming sections will show that it was an example of a clash between the meta-values of two cultures. Meta-values are defined as assumptions so uncontested that they

go without examination and unconsciously into all valuation processes (after Hodgkinson 1983, p.5).

Political versus Administrative Cultures

In New Zealand, traditional political action has been primarily regional or local in nature. It was settled from about 1100 AD by largely independent Maori *whanau* (extended families) who networked as *hapu* (tribes) and *iwi* (confederations). Policies had to be legitimated on the *marae* (the local meeting place) to be effective. The European settlers of the 1840s and 1850s also had an eye to local and provincial interests, rather than to national agendas, and set up provincial assemblies with adjunct Education Boards to administer their local primary schools (Oliver, 1981).

These arrangements stood until after the end of the Land Wars. In 1877, the members of New Zealand's provincial assemblies handed over responsibility for education to the newly formed national government. The 1877 Education Act was modified in 1914, in an era of jingoistic nationalism, to centralise the inspection of schools and curriculum development.

In the following decades there were a series of reports that led to the establishment of universal secondary education, universities and the polytechnics, as well as to reforms to curriculum and pedagogy (Cumming and Cumming, 1978). These reforms, and policy making since the 1880s, were explained and driven by four educational policy myths that were each, in turn, subsumed: selective support; equal opportunity; equal outcomes; and most recently, equal power (Beeby, in Renwick, 1986 pp.xi-xlv; Renwick, 1986; Macpherson, 1987).

Although fundamental purposes had clearly changed significantly through the decades, and reflected the development of a complex and unique society, the structures and practices of governance and administration in education remained much as they were settled back in 1877. As each era brought new problems and new policies, the DoE coped by elaborating its structure. New sections, new divisions, new levels, new practices and new philosophies were added incrementally until, by the 1970s, powers and responsibilities were widely diffused in complex patterns. The 'education system' operated as a number of conjoint and symbiotic bureaucracies; a head office, three regional offices, ten district offices and two teachers unions.

Conversely, over the same decades, there is strong evidence (see Gold 1985) to suggest that New Zealanders sought responsive political systems and caring social policies. They created a 'welfare state', dispensed with their 'Upper House' in the 1940s, and today have a uni-cameral and unitary political system with three year parliamentary terms. The linkages between cause and effect, the consequences of political intervention, and the outcomes of concentrating power in a nation of 3.5 million are relatively transparent. In general, there is an assumption of popular sovereignty, and centralism has remained in bad odour. As as professor of education history put it (Arnold 1985); "New Zealanders

resent going to Wellington to get permission to live."

And yet, as noted above, the national school education system developed a counter-vailing administrative culture of centralism. This culture drew its strength from:

- the personalities of national figures in education;
- controls exerted through examination, inspection and curriculum development systems;
- an enduring public belief in the quality of primary education;
- macro economic forces for national problem solving; and
- the power of symbiotic bureaucracies; the various agencies of the DoE and the teachers' unions.

Client dissatisfaction grew. Participation in educational administration became a major policy issue in the late 1970s (Watson, 1977). It reached the stage where national non-educationalist opinion-leaders, such as Professor Sir Frank Holmes (in Watson 1977, pp. 79-96), were calling for an "educational consumers' institute." Respected Parliamentarians (eg, Gair 1986) recalled years later that, by the early 1980s, half their mail was about 'problems in education' ... 'despite the best efforts of teachers and administrators'.

Relationships in the portfolio deteriorated sharply during the closing years of Sir Robert Muldoon's Government. Minister Wellington's blunt challenges to the system simply polarised attitudes. And while the consultative style of the new Labour Minister appointed in 1984, the Hon Russell Marshall, did help abate some of the pressure, and achieve some significant changes, he failed to attend to a fundamental tension — the mismatch between political and administrative meta-values in public education.

Political Intervention

Details available elsewhere (Macpherson, 1989a) show that the Parliamentarians of New Zealand tried unsuccessfully to intervene in 1986. Briefly, a bipartisan Science and Education Select Committee (Scott, 1986) used their new powers to the full, and after extensive public hearings, concluded that the quality of teaching in New Zealand public schools was being undermined by three conditions:

- 'provider capture', that is, where the providers of education had captured the terms of their service;
- grossly elaborated structures in educational administration with muddled lines of accountability and communication; and

- obsolete administrative attitudes and practices.

Despite this bipartisan call for radical change, the 'Education Establishment' was seen not to respond. The Hon David Lange's Labour Government suffered electorally in 1987, and when 'problems in education' were found to have been a major determinant of voting patterns, the Prime Minister himself took the portfolio. Overnight the language of portfolio management changed from 'consultation' to emphasise 'responsiveness'. A non-educationalist, Mr Brian Picot, was contracted to lead a review team.

Picot's Taskforce to Review Education Administration (1988, p.ix) was asked to provide:

- a review of administrative functions to maximise delegation;
- an evaluation of governance to accelerate devolution;
- a reorientation of administrative services to enhance client satisfaction; and
- a reorganisation of structure to achieve greater effectiveness, efficiency and equity.

Despite claims to the contrary by the teachers' unions, the Picot exercise was not a cost-cutting exercise, or an attempt to target teachers or unions in particular; despite the offence felt by many Parliamentarians when the Scott Report was ignored or ridiculed. The Picot process actually cost about NZ\$400 000, as did marketing and implementation, and all savings achieved through restructuring stayed in the portfolio. The increased costs discovered later, of localising some functions, actually led to a series of additional budgetary allocations.

A broader view would instead see the Picot exercise as but one of 17 taskforces set up by the Cabinet Social Equity Committee (CSEC) chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Geoffrey Palmer (later Prime Minister). The charters of these taskforces, and that of Sir Ivor Richardson's Royal Commission on Social Policy, overlapped, and together straddled all social portfolio responsibilities. This approach provided gradual and contestable advice, and ensured that proposals cohered with ex-Law Professor Palmer's (1979) views on the desirability of integrating the reform of constitutional, administrative and social policies. It is further evidence supporting the point made above; that broader social meta-values clashed with traditional public education administrative policies, and that the former were imposed on the portfolio.

The Picot Report

The Need for New Meta-Values

The Picot Taskforce (1988, pp.8-10) noted that the combined effects of new technology, changing and plural values, new cultural sensitivity, and the intensifying

demands on education services had outstripped the administrative capacities of the system. They assumed the urgent need for greater responsiveness in public education. Consistent with their terms of reference, they presumed that this could be achieved with appropriate incentive regimes at all levels for system and institutional managers.

It is also clear that the bipartisan Parliamentary support for major structural reform and radical devolution took the Picot Taskforce's thinking well past relocating administrative functions closer to the client; the fairly common horizontal extension of bureaucracy euphemistically referred to as 'decentralisation.' Instead, members came to believe that the devolution of decision-making power, resources and accountability was an effective means of altering the balance of power between the providers and the clients. Further, they assumed that this would lead to greater institutional, and hence, system responsiveness. The meta-value involved can be termed radical de-bureaucratism. There was some data-based logic to this assumption.

Justification for New Meta-Values

The Picot Taskforce (pp. 3-37) found that despite the near-heroic efforts of teachers and administrators, the management of public education had a number of inappropriate features; over-centralised decision making, too many decision points, high vulnerability to pressure group politics, excessive ministerial intervention, and a culture of centralism and dependence.

The management systems were shown to have complex and fragmented structures and processes, to rely on arbitrary institutional roles and poor information, and to feature wasteful duplications. Accountability systems measured fidelity to administrative regulations rather than how effectively educational aims had been achieved. Opportunity cost analyses were being neutralised by the weight of input economic thinking. The team concluded that the DoE "holds together because of the personal integrity of the management and their collective commitment to education rather than through any sound management structure, systems, or practice" (p. 29).

Perhaps the most telling argument of all put to the CSEC by the Taskforce was that the themes of low efficiency and undermined effectiveness were directly related to client dissatisfaction and to the alienation of disadvantaged groups. Whatever the evidence, and it appeared to triangulate well, this argument rendered traditional administrative meta-values, at the very least, politically obsolete.

Reform Strategy

Picot opted for radical devolution to reinforce the professionalism and dedication of individual teachers, parents and community participants. He developed the strategy by focussing on the organisational unit that sustains the relationship

between learner and teacher; the school or college. He proposed actions to alter the balance of power between clients and providers at institutional level to gain greater responsiveness. Key measures included reforming governance at all levels, local empowerment and dispersing as many functions as possible from 'the Centre.'

In a White Paper, *Tomorrows' Schools* (1988), the Government formally accepted almost all of Picot's ideas, laid out an implementation process, and set the 1st of October 1989 as the changeover date. Prior to the changeover date, each school community elected a Board of Trustees that began to negotiate a Charter of Objectives in order to reflect local needs within national guidelines. The Charter had to be approved by a new Ministry before it became the basis for local program budgeting and accrual accounting.

A national Education Review Agency was established to provide multi-skilled evaluation teams to make transparent how well each school used its funds to meet chartered objectives. A Parent Advocacy Council was proposed as a check on the tyrannical use of majority power or bureaucratic position. The ten Education Boards were abolished. In their place, Community Education Forums and Education Service Centres were planned to provide consultative and school support services.

Lange decided to use *ad hoc* policy taskforces rather than to establish the recommended national education policy council. The new slim Ministry took up a policy advisory role, managed property, moved funds, and developed personnel, administrative, governance and curriculum guidelines as part of the implementation strategy.

An implementation unit used a short-term video-based public relations campaign, short-life working parties, and inservice activity to help administrators acquire financial management and program budgeting skills. A good deal of 'paper progress' was achieved quickly with the preparation of guidelines by Implementation Working Parties. The State Services Commission negotiated new terms of service for administrators and teachers in a somewhat uncompromising manner.

Other taskforces reported on early childhood education and higher education, and a range of reforms have impacted in these sectors as well across all other portfolios. By late 1989, (by now Prime Minister) Palmer and his Ministers were consolidating gains and calming all portfolios for 1990, an election year.

As a detailed analysis of the implications of the Picot report for institutional managers concluded (Macpherson, 1989b p.42), it has become crucial that "researchers evaluate outcomes rigorously to ensure that policy makers move away from the processes of implementation, back to the fundamental questions of purpose and rightness". At this point it appears that all of Guthrie and Koppich's indicators were present, especially the radical change to the distribution and meta-values in decision-making power, resources, legitimacy and constituencies.

On the other hand, some of the unexpected outcomes of this 'high politics'

intervention suggest different perspectives on these 'reforms'. It must be noted, nevertheless, that outcomes are emergent and interpretations of these recent events are contested. Two areas are now given close attention; the sources of counter-pressures and policy governance.

Data on these matters are limited. There are two surveys known to be in the public domain (Barrington, 1989; Macpherson, 1989c). The triangulated views of eight well-placed informants prepared to speak freely on a non-attributable basis were used. Where views did not triangulate, they were set aside. Finally, there was the information regularly published by major interest groups and the new agencies. Nevertheless, given the methodological limitations involved, the position presented should be regarded as provisional but indicative.

Sources of Counter-Pressures

Role Loss and Self Discovery

The numbers of staff required at 'the Centre' fell. The ten Education Boards went and other agencies were down-scaled. At the same time the Ministry, the Review agency, Education Service Centres and schools began recruiting expert personnel on contracts. In other words, displaced persons had to let a part of their professional selves die and be bereaved, as it were, before constructing a revalued self in an emergent organisational culture.

The traumatic existential reality of 'high politics' reform for many have also been mirrored in Australian restructurings. There it has been shown (Pettit *et al.* 1990) that people grieved the going of key meta-values; those never hitherto questioned assumptions underpinning a professional self in a relatively stable organisational culture.

In each case, in the midst of internal trauma, the person had to reconstruct the meta-values of self as they negotiated a place in a developing organisation. The key point here is that the Guthrie and Koppich model does not offer a psychology of 'high politics' intervention.

Dynamic Conservatism

The challenge to 'professional' meta-values was felt widely. Many encountered formative and comparative performance evaluation criteria and processes for the first time. Feelings of disaffection were evident for a period in a surge of collective activity. Temporary phenomena included the formation of peer support groups, some polarisation of attitudes about management in education, and attempts by union organisers to convert the disaffection into fresh demands for representative power.

The loss of symbiotic structural relationships, the gradual development of middle management leadership in institutions, the emergence of community-based resource policies, and the allocation of more limited central bargaining

rights severely undercut the potential for 'provider capture'. Residual resistance to modern managerial ethics began to wane as new expertise and confidence began to counter-balance fearism, although market and corporate metaphors were persistently criticised for the exclusive service they gave to a new Right ideology.

The concern here is that the Guthrie and Koppich model assumes but fails to explain the existence and functions of dynamic conservatism (Schon, in Pettit *et al.*, 1990) in a sociology of 'reform'.

Disturbed Bargaining Relationships

Another controversial area concerns appointments, promotions and bargaining discretion; the politics of career. Boards of Trustees were made responsible for the appointment of principals on contracts, who in turn are to help recommend the appointment of their staff. Principals were empowered and held accountable for the day-to-day management of institutional life. National negotiations established the parameters of salaries and conditions.

An immediate response by the unions was to lobby for greater homogeneity rather than for greater differentiation and competition between members. Such member activity helped reaffirm power bases and helped sustain organisational integrity at a time when external sources of influence were being severed. This situation is a far cry from the days of diffuse powers among symbiotic bureaucracies. The Government, via the State Services Commission and industrial legislation, imposed new conditions of service. Two avenues left for lobbying, therefore, are the wider Labour Movement and at local levels.

The greater localisation of politics had a number of effects. Trustees and teachers quickly identified 'anomalies,' 'inconsistencies,' and eventually 'injustices' and 'inequities' that were soon identified at national union level as manifestations of "New Right ideology" (Chapman 1988, p.3). There were attempts made to move logs of claims from the parameters and details of formulae to the need for recentralised personnel practices and for more standardised conditions of service.

The foundation to these claims was the principle of equity; for clients in general and between professionals in particular, but rarely the converse. Further, the slogan of 'equity' was used to legitimate actions seeking to counter the mandated and managerial slogan of 'responsiveness.' Explaining and evaluating these and other claims to legitimacy requires philosophical machinery well outside the scope of the Guthrie and Koppich model.

The Supply of Expertise

Many primary school principals became concerned about the availability and expertise of trustees and administrative support staff in rural communities. Many

also noted that they had called in vain for leadership development inservice education with particular features; it should have addressed felt needs, accepted and proceeded from a wide range of current mindsets, offered negotiable curricula, and established and sustained supportive professional networks during and beyond implementation.

Ironically, as these problems emerged, the affected schools, communities, teacher groups and the teacher training institutions began to lobby for reregulation. Although client interests initially favoured incentive regimes that could only have taken effect in the medium and longer term, some sought a return to the centralist strategies used in the past in order to gain more immediate results. There were also actions taken by the Implementation Unit that contradicted the Picot management philosophy.

The point here is that while the Guthrie and Koppich model pointed to the crucial role that champions and groups have in sustaining directions, it offers no comment on their actions apart from effectiveness.

Trust in the Portfolio

It was noted above how the Parliamentarians had despaired of Education ever 'putting its house in order'. The process of resolving the legitimisation crisis involved a cycle of death and reconstruction.

The *Tomorrow's Schools* White Paper was presented as an invitation to attend a cremation of meta-values that teachers could not refuse to attend. At the time Lange (1988) emphasised his Cabinet's determination to introduce legislation if the teachers' unions did not co-operate without disrupting the education of the students in schools.

Ill-will deepened. Morale plummeted when a non-educator was appointed for eighteen months as the lead change agent. Many lamented the absence of a credible education statesperson who could give the changes an educative rather than simply a management rationale. The most intense morale problems were in the DoE, that is, among the very personnel expected to implement the Picot philosophy with enthusiasm.

The emotional backlash in the profession reached a peak when the effects of a highly effective print and video public relations programme began to wear off. The attitudes among primary school principals at the time (cf. Barrington 1989; Macpherson, 1989c) highlighted their deep need to have their service affirmed and legitimised in educational terms.

Taken together, there was a loss of professional self-esteem, non-negotiable and new definitions of expertise, new limits to collective bargaining, fading trust in others, and a process of reconstructing purposes and legitimisation. In other words, in addition to the political processes of realigning social reality, the cultural processes of legitimating changed practices were part of 'high politics' reforms.

In general, then, the Guthrie and Koppich model does not appear to explain how answers are found during 'high politics' reform to some key questions. **What is right? What is significant? How is social reality realigned? How are changed practices legitimated? What is responsive management? What is responsible educative leadership?**

The importance of these six questions is established by considering some of the unanticipated outcomes of changes made to policy governance at local levels.

School Governance

An Essential Service

The major policy documents specify that New Zealand institutional managers will have four major parts to their new role; facilitating governance, corporate planning, educative leadership and management services (Macpherson, 1989b). The first and essential service expected by *Tomorrows' Schools*, the facilitation of school governance, created instructive outcomes directly related to the six questions above.

The Degradation of Policy Making

The first effect of the counter-vailing forces noted above was to distort the philosophical aspects of school policy making. Boards of trustees developed a primary concern for the overall policy that their principal, as chief executive officer of the board, would implement. It was also widely assumed that each principal possessed a number of philosophical skills to help others use desirable ways and means of making right decisions.

In brief, this implied being able to:

- appreciate the relativity of the cultures of and served by the school, the school community, the region and the broader society (Rizvi, 1990);
- to analyse, understand and explain complex policy dilemmas;
- unravel clashes of values and cultures so that trustees could make ethically sophisticated judgements (Evers, 1987);
- use an advanced knowledge of teaching, learning and educative administration when advocating policy; and
- use an educative approach to leadership and a sophisticated set of methods to implement policy with professional colleagues (Northfield, *et al.*, 1987).

The evidence is that comparatively few had the education or expertise to satisfy such expectations. Hence, among the effects of the 'high politics' intervention were that principals tended to suffer from self-doubt, felt vulnerable in industrial matters, lacked a sense of being right and felt alienated by instrumental expectations. Where false confidence was created through the adoption of managerial technicism, a series of unfortunate multiplier effects were soon evident.

Whatever the validity of Picot's intentions, the general process helped create attitudinal conditions antithetical to the development of the philosophical services required by boards of trustees. This suggests that Picot's 'high politics' intervention embodied a conceptually deficient theory of systemic change.

The Maldevelopment of Trusteeship

An early task for principals was to manage the conditions for the election of boards of trustees. The technical tasks included identifying the electorates, explaining the composition, role, support, and powers of boards, and then acting as returning officers. The appropriate political role for principals during this phase included making contact with local education statespersons such as *kau-matua* (Maori elders), disseminating information, and encouraging discussion about expertise without being compromised as the Guardians of the democratic process.

Once trustees had been elected, the principals were expected to help them prepare institutional charters within national guidelines and agreements for education. This meant drawing on sophisticated philosophical, planning and political skills since the draft charter had to define the purpose of the institution, the intended outcomes for students, and, how programmes would take account of students' and potential students' interests, staff strengths, as well as community resources and interests.

Unfortunately, it appears that many principals took a dominant leadership role at this point and, in their haste to produce charters, established approaches that retarded the learning of educative governance and the emergence of community leadership. There were, on the other hand, many examples of subtle process facilitation, cultural sensitivity and a low-key expertise in collaborative and strategic planning techniques.

Assisting planning in a setting of new direct democracy in a wider context of plural interests also meant realising the need and then arranging bilateral, horizontal and vertical negotiations in a range of cultural modes and reconciling outcomes. Such an approach presumed that principals had few doubts about their professional competence or industrial position, that there was an organisational culture of trust and positive reinforcement, and that leadership at all levels was enabling and educative.

Again, it was a matter of idealist expectations born of imposed meta-values; the meta-values of de-bureaucratism that emphasised responsive and responsible

management, but at cost to the questions of rightness, significance, realigning social realities and legitimating practices.

Variable Access to Resources

Politically astute principals moved quickly to acquire supportive resources and to interpret national guidelines. Some arranged appropriate linkages, for example, by inviting the DoE's liaison group to consult with community and staff elders to find policies for the school that resolved seemingly diverse national and local expectations. Others made the findings of applied research on staff selection criteria and procedures (Chapman, 1985a: 1985b) available to trustees when the task faced them for the first time.

There were also examples of resources being held at 'the Centre' to sustain policy leverage over management education, and reports that the prevailing climate was characterised by a low levels of professional and support expertise, adversarial relationships and damaged self-esteem, distrustful monitoring and mechanistic management. A highly respected ex-Director (Beeby, 1988) doubted the wisdom of locating the Ministry and Review functions in separate agencies of state.

The irony appears to be that de-bureaucratism, the converse of bureaucracy, reflects the limits of bureaucratic thought. The concern to encourage responsiveness and to localise responsibility appears to have given less priority to learning how to articulate what is best and significant in education (McKenzie, 1988), and to providing appropriate means (Stewart and Prebble, 1985; Cardno, 1988; Caldwell and Spinks, 1988) for educators to realign their assumptions about social reality and to legitimate new practices.

These findings from the New Zealand case of 'high politics' reform are now deployed to locate the Guthrie and Koppich model in a more general and holistic model of leadership.

Limits to the Guthrie and Koppich Model

The sections above give substantial support to Guthrie and Koppich's modelling of the preconditions and indicators of 'high politics' intervention. All of its components were represented in the radical reconstruction of the New Zealand public school system. There, were, however, aspects of the reforms that outstripped the parameters of the model that are now discussed.

Questionable Assumptions

The scope of the model is restricted to the realm of material things. The metaphors of death and bereavement prior to professional rebirth have no place in the Guthrie and Koppich model. The model fails to explain the existence of existential or shared social realities. The roles of reflection and interaction are not considered.

The model gives 'high politics' a privileged role in social affairs without justification. It is a model that de-emphasises many other social structures to give political systems a primary role in the authoritative allocation of values to society. It also assumes that the three preconditions above are forms of input that culminate in a gestalt switch into 'high politics'; an extra-ordinary process that provides unique outputs — new public choices, resource distribution, revised regulations, radical reforms — which in turn feedback values to society and reorder alliances.

The model also provides, especially through the workings of more standard politics, a benign view of social order and its political systems. In this latter standard mode, it is assumed that competition, bargaining and compromise among plural interest groups explain the distribution of rewards, as well as produce checks and new balances. In both modes the model appears to adopt uncritically the presumed legitimacy of politicians' actions.

The key point here is that the dual model appears to use a natural systems approach to political analysis. Both standard and 'high politics' are conceived of as natural systems of inputs, processes and outputs. The problem is that a natural systems ideology is located in realism, rather than in idealism, tends to reify social realities, and excludes the possibility of 'political realities' being conceived of and evaluated as arbitrary cultural artefacts (Greenfield, 1975; in Griffiths *et al.* 1988).

This has the effect of ingratiating influential people's actions and their impact on the patterns of others' assumptions about practices, context and rightness (Hodgkinson, 1978; Macpherson, in Griffiths *et al.*, 1988:180). Such an approach tends to set aside sociological or philosophical tools, and encourages the belief that political systems simply have a life of their own.

A Conflicted Theory of State

Another serious limit concerns the implicit theory held about the nature of policy steerage in public services. To explain, different theories of state assume that the policies of public institutions, such as schools and school systems, are steered in at least five ways (after Dunleavy and O'Leary, 1987:329-341):

- pluralist theories locate steerage with citizens who vote, influence party politics and lobby through interest groups, and therefore explain the variations and the multiple directions in the policies of public utilities in terms of changing alliances;
- new-Right theories also locate steerage with citizens, but note that distortions in public choice-making make it difficult for institutions of state, however responsive, to avoid creating unanticipated effects;
- elite theories assume that public services are steered by elites who manipulate the liberal democratic process of policy making;

- Marxist instrumental theories locate steerage with a capitalist elite that tries to embed its ends into government policies in order to adjust public policy making; and
- neo-pluralist theories, which assume that a dual polity operates. Public institutions offer multiple points of access for representatives, while these and other structures also give elites degrees of steerage over knowledge and process.

According to this typology of theories of state, the Guthrie and Koppich dual model draws on pluralist assumptions to explain standard politics, and yet switches to neo-pluralist and elitist ideas to explain the dynamics of 'high politics'. Although the data of the New Zealand reforms can be described to a degree by the dual model, but only within the limits identified, the theoretical ambiguities involved have yet to be explained. Such a dual claim also begs the more abstract epistemological question; how do we judge between these competing theories of state or between particular combinations of theories?

Doubtful Epistemology

Where pluralist theories embody a natural systems ideology, others, respectively, employ economic neo-rationalism, structural Marxism, elitism and neo-pluralism. The problem they share is that they employ arbitrary foundational premises in their justificatory logic. In other words, all of these theories claim to be trustworthy in terms of different premises or foundational truth claims that, on close examination, turn out to be the preloved articles of faith of a 'discipline' or to be an expression of ideological commitment (Walker and Evers, 1982).

A non-foundational approach avoids this vicious regress by emphasising *internal and external coherence*; between the theoretical, empirical and valuational components in beliefs or knowledge claims, as well as with the wider patterns of knowledge underpinning the most effective explanations of practical matters.

How do we apply the coherence test? We extract *common standards* from the overlapping accounts of shared problems, or we adopt them from other shared areas of the theoretical frameworks of participants. By examining the actual content of touchstone, we discover what values and procedures each of the competing theories is committed to in common with the others, and ask which of the theories comes out best in view of these shared values and procedures. We test the competing theories or divergent solutions to one group of problems by reference to their common solutions to another set of problems.

(Walker *et al.*, in Walker 1987, p.16)

Conclusions

Although the data available above and elsewhere does not permit definitive theorising, there is potential in the overlap between elite theory and neo-pluralism. The Guthrie and Koppich model discussed the detailed mechanics of strategic intervention and political activity that, as shown in New Zealand, determines significance and realigns social reality.

The key problems noted above concerned theories of social reality, state and knowledge. A non-foundational effective web of theories might therefore incorporate the views that:

1. there are conceptual, social and material realities in human affairs (after Hodgkinson, 1981) wherein;
 - conceptual activity is triggered by reflection on two key questions; what is right and what is significant?
 - social reality is recreated and transformed by interaction. One example is political activity that alters what is held to be the distribution and justification of powers and resources. Another is cultural activity that legitimates changes to professional practice;
 - material reality in organisations is sustained by managerial and evaluative services. Where responsive management is driven by a concern for what is achievable, responsible management would focus on effectiveness, efficiency and fundamental purposes;
2. a dual politics of leadership in New Zealand existed that
 - provided for standard politics with traditional representative structures, and with liberal corporatist and technocratic mechanisms of state being serviced by professional elites; and
 - for 'high politics' (after Guthrie and Koppich) when the meta-values of mechanisms of state and 'provider capture' had to be challenged by leaders who would be educative, so that administrative meta-values could be reconciled with wider social meta-values.

To conclude, these propositions are not without support. They are epistemologically and conceptually consistent with a practical, integrated and holistic model of educative leadership developed and tested during a four-year applied research project in Australian education systems (Duignan and Macpherson, 1987; forthcoming). That model, however, will have to be explained elsewhere.

Notes

1. This paper was developed from 'New Reform Directions for Educational Governance in New Zealand' a paper presented to the AERA Conference, San

Francisco, 27-31 March, 1989. It is the draft of a chapter intended for publication in a forthcoming publication *Restructuring Schools: An International Perspective on the Movement to Transform the Control and Performance of Schools*, edited by Hedley Beare and William Lowe Boyd. By invitation, it was to comment on the appropriateness of the Guthrie and Koppich model (see Note 4 below), and was presented to the IIP Conference, Manchester, 20-29 April, 1990.

2. Dr R J S Macpherson is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Administrative, Higher and Adult Education Studies at the University of New England, Armidale, NSW 2351, Australia. He is the Sub Dean of the Educational Administration Programme and publishes in the areas of systemic reform, recent theory, the curriculum of educational administration and research methodology.

3. Taskforce to Review Education Administration. *Administering for Excellence: Effective Administration in Education*. Chairman Brian Picot. 10 May 1988.

Picot is a millionaire director and chairman of companies. He is a senior member of New Zealand's "corporate oligarchy" (Jesson, 1987, p.87) and the Pro-Chancellor of Auckland University. Other members included Dr Peter Ramsey, an associate professor of education at Waikato University, who, with others (Ramsey *et al.*, 1983) had researched successful and unsuccessful schools. Another member was Ms Margaret Rosemergy, a senior lecturer at the Wellington College of Education who had helped formulate Labour Party education policy. Ms Whetumarama Wereta, a social statistician at the Department of Maori Affairs, joined the taskforce to emphasise a Maori perspective; she is from the *Ngaiterangi-Ngatiranganui*. The fifth member, Mr Colin Wise, represented employers' interests. He is a successful businessman from Dunedin with active links with higher education. The Taskforce Secretariat was led by Mr Maurice Gianotti, a senior DoE official, now chief executive of the national Review agency.

4. Guthrie, J.W. and Koppich, J.E. "Ready, AIM, Reform: Building a Model of Education Reform and 'High Politics' ", the draft of a chapter intended for publication in a forthcoming publication *Restructuring Schools: An International Perspective on the Movement to Transform the Control and Performance of Schools*, edited by Hedley Beare and William Lowe Boyd.

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